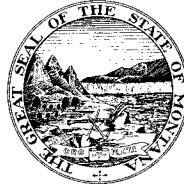


OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 1/19/07
HB 152

BRIAN SCHWEITZER
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER
LT. GOVERNOR

House Bill 152, Applying inflation adjustments for K-12 BASE aid and general fund components
Before the House Education Committee, January 19, 2007, 3:00 PM

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the record, my name is Jan Lombardi, and I am Governor Brian Schweitzer's education policy advisor.

It is my pleasure to be here this morning in support of the Montana's quality public K-12 education. HB 152, sponsored by Representative Branae on behalf of the State Superintendent, contains some of the same principles as the Governor's education bill, Senate Bill 152, which has already passed out of the Senate Education committee.

Governor Schweitzer wants to build a strong academic future for all Montana's children and build a strong workforce for tomorrow. We know that education matters from the youngest Montanans getting ready for school and having access to full-time kindergarten to young adults hoping to attend and afford college.

The Governor wants to continue taking steps toward fully addressing the needs of our K-12 school system with inflationary increases for the entitlements and strategies to help schools recruit and retain quality educators. House Bill 152, as does the Governor's education bill, Senate Bill 152, includes these funding mechanisms to better support Montana students. The actual funding for the quality educator component increases, and the inflationary increases for the entitlements, as defined in Senate Bill 152, are included in House Bill 2.

Quality educators are the backbone of a quality education system. And Montana schools have difficulty attracting and retaining teachers and other licensed professionals needed to meet Montana accreditation standards. Both House Bill 152, as well as Senate Bill 152 support increasing the Quality Educator Component in the school funding formula, but at differing amounts. It is important to note that the quality educator increase allows each school district to make its own local decision on how to best recruit and retain necessary staff.

On behalf of Governor Brian Schweitzer, I ask this committee to support these important concepts for increases in state funding as they help address the needs of schools. Thank you.